

needs to be paid for in a responsible, long-term way. Upholding the budget point of order does not kill the bill; it sends it back to committee to make sure it is fully paid for.

So let's not be afraid tonight. Let's say to our House colleagues: Colleagues, we agree with you on your vote, but we must pay for this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I need to make a budget point of order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is still time remaining in favor of the bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, the pending measure, H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015, violates section 311(b) of the fiscal year 2009 budget resolution by causing a net increase in the long-term deficit in excess of \$5 billion in the 10-year period of fiscal years 2025 through 2034. Therefore, I raise a point of order against this measure pursuant to section 311(b) of S. Con. Res. 70, the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2009, and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. I yield back the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. I move to waive all applicable sections of the Budget Act, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 71, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 143 Leg.]

YEAS—71

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Baldwin	Franken	Murphy
Bennet	Gillibrand	Murray
Blumenthal	Graham	Nelson
Blunt	Hatch	Paul
Booker	Heinrich	Peters
Boozman	Heitkamp	Reed
Boxer	Heller	Reid
Brown	Hirono	Roberts
Burr	Isakson	Rounds
Cantwell	Kaine	Sanders
Capito	King	Schatz
Cardin	Kirk	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Cassidy	Manchin	Tester
Cochran	Markey	Tillis
Collins	McCain	Udall
Coons	McCaskill	Warner
Corker	McConnell	Warren
Cornyn	Menendez	Whitehouse
Donnelly	Merkley	Wicker
Durbin	Mikulski	Wyden
Feinstein	Moran	

NAYS—29

Ayotte	Enzi	Johnson
Barrasso	Ernst	Lankford
Coats	Fischer	Lee
Cotton	Gardner	Perdue
Crapo	Grassley	Portman
Cruz	Hoeben	Risch
Daines	Inhofe	Rubio

Sasse
Scott
Sessions

Shelby
Sullivan
Thune

Toomey
Vitter

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 71, the nays are 29.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to. The point of order is not sustained, and the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, we will soon be voting on final passage of H.R. 2, the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.

As I mentioned earlier, this bill represents more than 2 years of hard work on both sides of the Capitol. And, it represents a real step forward for bipartisan health care policy. I am proud to have been one of the authors of this legislation and I look forward to what I believe we will see—the bill pass with bipartisan support.

I want to commend everyone who worked on this legislation. I particularly want to thank Senator Max Baucus who worked with me from the beginning on this effort here in the Senate. In addition, I would like to thank the current ranking member of the Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN for all his work. I also want to thank our colleagues on the House Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means Committees who also worked very hard in crafting this SGR fix.

As with any major legislative effort, there are a number of staffers—both current and former—who also deserve our thanks. From my own Finance Committee staff, I want to thank Dan Todd, Kristin Welsh, Erin Dempsey, Katie Simeon, Kim Brandt, and Becky Shipp for all of their hard work. I also want to thank my senior team—Jay Khosla, Chris Campbell, and Mark Prater. On the Democratic side of the committee, I want to thank Karen Fisher, David Schwartz, Matt Kazan, Juan Machado, Scott Levy, and Colin Goldfinch.

I also want to commend the efforts of Scott Raab and Monica Popp from the Senate Republican leadership offices.

In addition, from the House side, I specifically want to thank Charlotte Ivancic and Wendell Primus.

We have also gotten quite a bit of help from CBO in this effort. For that, I want to thank Lori Housman, Tom Bradley, and Holly Harvey.

CMS also provided vital technical assistance as we put this legislation together. For that, I'd like to thank Jennifer Druckman, Ira Burney, and Anne Scott.

And, of course, we couldn't have done without the help of the Legislative Counsels' offices, particularly John Goetcheus, Kelly Malone, Ruth Ernst, and Phil Lynch on the Senate side and Jessica Shapiro and Jessica Cross over in the House.

I wish to once again urge my colleagues to support this bill. It is a monumental achievement. It is legislation that has been long in the offing. I

wish to thank everybody on both sides for the cooperation we have had. I just want to personally express my gratitude for being able to pass this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I will be very brief. I think tonight is a milestone for the Medicare Program—a lifeline for millions of older people. That is because tonight the Senate is voting to retire the outdated, inefficiency-rewarding, commonsense-defying Medicare reimbursement system.

As Senator HATCH noted, it has been bipartisan; it has long been bipartisan. I think this is an important night for the Senate and it is going to be long remembered.

I yield the floor.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 92, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 144 Leg.]

YEAS—92

Alexander	Feinstein	Moran
Ayotte	Fischer	Murkowski
Baldwin	Flake	Murphy
Barrasso	Franken	Murray
Bennet	Gardner	Nelson
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Peters
Booker	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Reed
Boxer	Heinrich	Reid
Brown	Heitkamp	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Cantwell	Hirono	Rounds
Capito	Hoeben	Sanders
Cardin	Inhofe	Schatz
Carper	Isakson	Schumer
Casey	Johnson	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kaine	Stabenow
Coats	King	Sullivan
Cochran	Kirk	Tester
Collins	Klobuchar	Thune
Coons	Lankford	Tillis
Corker	Leahy	Toomey
Cornyn	Manchin	Udall
Cotton	Markey	Vitter
Crapo	McCain	Warner
Daines	McCaskill	Warren
Donnelly	McConnell	Whitehouse
Durbin	Menendez	Wicker
Enzi	Merkley	Wyden
Ernst	Mikulski	

NAYS—8

Cruz	Rubio	Sessions
Lee	Sasse	Shelby
Perdue	Scott	

The bill (H.R. 2) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. What is the pending business?

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Pending:

Portman amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking.

Portman amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of "homeless person" under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth.

Vitter amendment No. 284 (to amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

AMENDMENT NO. 271 WITHDRAWN

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, in the interests of moving the human trafficking bill forward and with the understanding that these amendments could be offered later in the process, I withdraw my amendment No. 271.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is withdrawn.

The Senator from Ohio.

AMENDMENT NO. 270 WITHDRAWN

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, in addition, I withdraw my amendment No. 270.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is withdrawn.

The majority leader.

AMENDMENT NO. 1120

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 1120, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL], for Mr. CORNYN, proposes an amendment numbered 1120.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To strengthen the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act by incorporating additional bipartisan amendments)

Strike section 101 and insert the following:
SEC. 101. DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 201 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 3014. Additional special assessment

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date of enactment of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 and ending on September 30, 2019, in addition to the assessment imposed under section 3013, the court shall assess an amount of \$5,000 on any non-indigent person or entity convicted of an offense under—

"(1) chapter 77 (relating to peonage, slavery, and trafficking in persons);

"(2) chapter 109A (relating to sexual abuse);

"(3) chapter 110 (relating to sexual exploitation and other abuse of children);

"(4) chapter 117 (relating to transportation for illegal sexual activity and related crimes); or

"(5) section 274 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1324) (relating to

human smuggling), unless the person induced, assisted, abetted, or aided only an individual who at the time of such action was the alien's spouse, parent, son, or daughter (and no other individual) to enter the United States in violation of law.

"(b) SATISFACTION OF OTHER COURT-ORDERED OBLIGATIONS.—An assessment under subsection (a) shall not be payable until the person subject to the assessment has satisfied all outstanding court-ordered fines and orders of restitution arising from the criminal convictions on which the special assessment is based.

"(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' FUND.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a fund, to be known as the 'Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund' (referred to in this section as the 'Fund'), to be administered by the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

"(d) TRANSFERS.—In a manner consistent with section 3302(b) of title 31, there shall be transferred to the Fund from the General Fund of the Treasury an amount equal to the amount of the assessments collected under this section, which shall remain available until expended.

"(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts in the Fund, in addition to any other amounts available, and without further appropriation, the Attorney General, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall, for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2019, use amounts available in the Fund to award grants or enhance victims' programming under—

"(A) sections 202, 203, and 204 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 14044a, 14044b, and 14044c);

"(B) subsections (b)(2) and (f) of section 107 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105); and

"(C) section 214(b) of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13002(b)).

"(2) GRANTS.—Of the amounts in the Fund used under paragraph (1), not less than \$2,000,000, if such amounts are available in the Fund during the relevant fiscal year, shall be used for grants to provide services for child pornography victims under section 214(b) of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13002(b)).

"(3) APPLICATION.—Amounts transferred from the Fund pursuant to this section for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2019 are subject to the requirements contained in Public Law 113-235 for funds for programs authorized under sections 330 through 340 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b-256).

"(f) TRANSFERS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Effective on the day after the date of enactment of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, on September 30 of each fiscal year, all unobligated balances in the Fund shall be transferred to the Crime Victims Fund established under section 1402 of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10601).

"(2) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts transferred under paragraph (1)—

"(A) shall be available for any authorized purpose of the Crime Victims Fund; and

"(B) shall remain available until expended.

"(g) COLLECTION METHOD.—The amount assessed under subsection (a) shall, subject to subsection (b), be collected in the manner that fines are collected in criminal cases.

"(h) DURATION OF OBLIGATION.—Subject to section 3613(b), the obligation to pay an assessment imposed on or after the date of enactment of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 shall not cease until the assessment is paid in full.

"(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

"(1) WRITTEN CERTIFICATION.—Not later than September 30, 2016, and each September 30 thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a written certification as to the total amount in the Fund.

"(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In any fiscal year for which a written certification submitted under paragraph (1) indicates the total amount in the Fund is less than \$30,000,000, there is authorized to be appropriated to the Fund an amount equal to \$30,000,000 minus the total amount indicated in the certification."

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 201 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3013 the following:

"3014. Additional special assessment."

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the Cornyn amendment No. 1120 to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Roy Blunt, Johnny Isakson, John Barrasso, Pat Roberts, Mike Crapo, Roger F. Wicker, Tom Cotton, James M. Inhofe, Tim Scott, Richard Shelby, John Thune, John Boozman, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, Steve Daines.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, like every Member of this body, I am frustrated we haven't been able to reach an agreement to pass the bipartisan Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

So today—just now—we have offered a compromise amendment that provides a path forward on this important legislation. I want to express my gratitude to the majority leader for teeing up this amendment and this vote and helping us move forward to resolve this problem.

Briefly, this proposal would completely strike a provision in the underlying bill that Members on the other side have objected to regarding the application of the Hyde amendment. The proposal would replace this language with a provision negotiated by Leader PELOSI from H.R. 2, the so-called doc fix bill that we just passed overwhelmingly and that passed the House a few weeks ago 392 to 37—180 House Democrats supported this language in the House bill. The Pelosi language from this bill is similar to my proposal, in that it simply says that any funds used to provide services to human trafficking victims would be subject to the same requirements as funds under the Public Health Services Act. This would clarify that all money in the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund must be derived from the General Treasury, the routine and ordinary source of all Federal funding.

In other words, requirements placed upon funds under my bill would not be placed on money derived from criminal fees or penalties, something our Democratic friends seem to have some objection to, but they would only be placed upon money drawn from the General Treasury. This is exactly what Members on the other side have asked for.

Finally, as an additional measure of good faith, my proposal would also include an amendment drafted by Senator LEAHY, the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, that has been supported by every Democratic Member of that committee. This amendment would authorize the appropriation of additional funds into the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund.

Some Members on the other side of the aisle have filibustered this important legislation because they say they objected to language I included that references the Hyde amendment. I have now agreed to strike that language. They are also filibustering because they objected to attaching routine Hyde restrictions that have been the law of the land for nearly 40 years—the money that is outside of the General Treasury process. Now, I have agreed to change the language of my bill so the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund only includes money drawn from the General Treasury. I have also agreed to accept the amendment from Senator LEAHY that I previously opposed in the interest of trying to get to “yes.”

I plan to speak more on this tomorrow, but I am hopeful that by finally making these changes, we can be met at least halfway by our friends across the aisle. I feel like we have continued to try to make changes in this legislation in an interest of giving them an opportunity to vote for a bill they said they all support but which they ultimately filibustered because of the objections I just addressed, and both of the major objections are addressed by this amendment and this legislation.

So I hope we can get to a resolution on this bill. The victims of human trafficking are typically young girls between the ages of 12 and 14 years old. This is justly called modern-day slavery, because these victims of human trafficking are literally enslaved and sold for sex or held for involuntary servitude against their will. Many of them come from other countries, but the vast majority of them come from right here in the United States of America.

We need to do something about this. This legislation does that “something,” and I think we have more than demonstrated good faith in trying to meet our colleagues' objections across the aisle by proposing language that works, that accomplishes the result but removes the objectionable language our colleagues across the aisle have seen fit to filibuster on.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

MEDICARE ACCESS AND CHIP REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, while my colleague is on the floor, I want to commend Senator CANTWELL for her superb work on this legislation. Senator CANTWELL has really been the leader in the effort to get the Secretary of Health and Human Services to look at alternative payment models in the Medicare Advantage Program. This is a hugely important program for us in the Northwest. It is also, by the way, very extensively used in Minnesota. I think my colleague from Washington State has done particularly important work in also looking, as part of this discussion, at what is called a value-based modifier.

Mr. President, I have some thanks to make—and I will be very brief—but before I do that, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with Senator CANTWELL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. CANTWELL. I rise to talk about a provision in this legislation intended to move the health care payment system toward better outcomes and efficiency.

Physicians in my State and others are innovating by partnering with high-performing Medicare Advantage plans. This model can grant the health care provider significant accountability and ownership of a patient's health, with the result of achieving impressive health outcomes, reducing overlap and duplication, and saving money for everyone involved.

I was successful in including a provision in the bill requiring the Secretary of Health and Human Services to study integrating alternative payment models in the Medicare Advantage payment system. This study will also assess feasibility of including a value-based modifier.

I look forward to working with my Finance Committee colleagues in the future to promote the innovation and efficiency taking place in Medicare Advantage.

I ask that the distinguished ranking member of the Finance Committee work with me in the future toward these goals.

Mr. WYDEN. H.R. 2 moves the physician payment system from one that rewards volume to one that rewards value. I look forward to extending value-based policies across the entire spectrum of Medicare. I agree, it is important to reward all providers and all Medicare Advantage plans that provide high value and high quality care. I look forward to working with the Senator and the entire Finance Committee to achieve these goals.

Ms. CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. WYDEN. Just a couple of quick thank-yous, and then I want to let my colleague wrap up for our side.

It is pretty clear, Mr. President, that a bill of this magnitude does not happen by osmosis. It comes about because

of scores of hearings, roundtables, briefings, and countless hours of staff time. I am just going to take a couple of minutes to thank some people who did so much to make this possible.

First, I thank Leader REID and his very capable health care staffer Kate Leone. When there is a big health care issue before the Senate, Kate Leone is the person you want to have in the trenches with you. I want to thank Senator REID, because during the short tenure in which I was the chair of the Senate Finance Committee, we started working closely together on reforming the Medicare reimbursement system, and his leadership is very much a part of the success of this evening.

Second, there was staff at the various congressional support agencies who provided technical assistance. We are talking about CMS, the Congressional Budget Office, the Congressional Research Service, legislative counsel, and the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. I would also like to note the efforts made by Ira Burney, Anne Scott, and Jennifer Druckman in the CMS Office of Legislation and Tom Bradley and Lori Housman of the Congressional Budget Office.

I would also like to recognize Chairman HATCH and his very capable and dedicated staff. They worked many, many months on this issue, constantly reaching across the aisle—and former Hatch staffer, Dan Todd, current Hatch staffers Kristin Welsh and Erin Dempsey particularly deserve recognition.

I want to close by thanking my staff, our finance staff and personal staff, affectionately known as the health team. Some, such as Karen Fisher, Matt Kazan, Juan Machado, and former staffer David Schwartz have survived two Democratic chairmen and more doc fixes than they could possibly wish to remember. So this is an especially significant moment for them. Others, like Anne Dwyer, Hannah Hawkins, and Jennifer Phillips, provided invaluable insight and counsel along the way.

One last point, if I might. Having tried for years to specialize in health care, going back to the days when I was codirector of the Oregon Gray Panthers, I thought that over the years that I picked up a little bit with respect to health care policy and came to really understand the issues—not so much, particularly when I think about the extraordinary work of two very talented individuals in our office who have really been the leaders, in my view, on this SGR reform cause. One was our health chief Liz Jurinka. She deserves special notice for her persistent leadership, creativity, and focus and, secondly, her colleague, Jocelyn Moore, whom we had the good fortune—who came to us from Senator Rockefeller. She brings great expertise and years of experience to the field. Certainly, what I have learned from them, after a career of trying to specialize in these issues, has done so much to assist the committee, assist

me, and I want to express my gratitude to them.

The work of the bipartisan Finance Committee staff—through all its fits and starts—is what got us here today. I want to thank all of them, and I think it is very appropriate that my colleague from Washington State, Senator CANTWELL, who has done so much good work on these issues, is going to close today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Oregon for his leadership on this legislation and on health care in general. I will always think of him as a Senator who has been an advocate for reforming our health care system and oftentimes wanting to move faster than everybody here.

I am with him and the Northwest is with him, and that is why tonight is really a very proud moment for him as the ranking member of this committee to see the monumental shift in the way we have been dealing with the payment system and the Medicare access system and the children's health care program. So tonight, hopefully, we will put behind us a long-debated issue of how physicians are paid, but it will also start us on a new path to make sure people in America are guaranteed better outcomes and a process by which we will help reduce the costs of health care by focusing on both the cost of health care and the outcomes. So my colleague entered into the RECORD tonight—and I want to thank him for that—a colloquy that addresses the issue of how those who are part of accountable care organizations who will be given the resources to focus on high-performing health care systems will be able to under this study equate exactly how well they can do and how well they should be rewarded in reducing costs and giving better outcomes.

My colleague from Oregon speaks of this because he and I come from a part of the country that literally delivers better outcomes in health care at lower costs than many other States in the United States of America. Our residents want to know why the rest of the country can't practice medicine the same way. We want those savings that you get from the health care system to be plugged in or used for other purposes. They could be part of tax reform even. But we also want the citizens of our State to get better health care. We want them to have better outcomes, and we think that moving off a fee-for-service system and onto a system that focuses on the outcome of patients is the best way for our country to move forward.

So this legislation before us today builds on that process we started in the Affordable Care Act, something that is called the value-based modifier that basically takes the fee-for-service system—when you think about it, fee for service is about volume, about ordering more tests—and we are saying we want physicians to be rewarded for the out-

come and the good performance and the focus on whether the patient actually gets well or is given the best health care delivery.

In essence, the value modifier seeks to emulate the success Washington and Oregon have had and give us better, healthy outcomes for patients and lower costs. This year the value-based modifier is the beginning which physicians for the first time will see an adjustment. And building on that progress, Sylvia Burwell, the Secretary of Health and Human Services recently announced that Medicare would aim to tie 90 percent of their Medicare fee-for-service payments to quality or value initiatives by 2018. So this is tying half of all Medicare fee-for-service payments to an alternative payment model and helping us move forward on, again, focusing on outcomes.

I thank my colleague for entering into the colloquy the ongoing analysis that we need to do to continue to make changes on the health care system and congratulate him on the significant success of getting this bill done. It means we can spend more time focusing on efficiency, on quality, on the best way to compensate physicians but also keeping the focus on the patients and making sure they get better outcomes.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL AND RAILROAD SAFETY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I wish to state my opposition to S. 650 in its current form. This legislation would extend the deadline for installation of Positive Train Control, PTC, by 5 years. I cannot agree with allowing such an extension without addressing so many other critical rail safety matters.

As Joe Boardman, the head of Amtrak and former FRA Administrator has said, "PTC is the most important rail safety advancement of our time." The need for this technology was first brought to our attention over 45 years ago, sparked by a head-on train collision in Darien, CT in 1969. There have

been many other horrible crashes since, and within the past decade alone, the National Transportation Safety Board has completed more than two dozen train accident investigations that took 65 lives and injured over 1,100 people—all of this, according to the NTSB, could have been prevented by PTC.

One of those horrific crashes occurred in 2008 in Southern California, and 25 lives were lost. PTC could have saved those lives. Accordingly, soon after that tragedy, Congress took real, thoughtful, substantive action and gave railroads more than 7 years to implement the life-saving technology of PTC. Since then, there have been other major accidents, such as the horrific crash of a Metro-North train in the Bronx in 2013 in which four lives were lost. Metro-North did not have PTC, and the NTSB has said the technology could have prevented those four deaths. Now, as we near the end of the 7 years, S. 650 gives railroads an extension of 5 more years—and then an option for 2 more after that. So, again, we must wait and risk continued loss of life as we further put off proven, life-saving technology.

There may be issues with the deadline, and we should have a discussion about those issues. We should also have a discussion about the many other issues with PTC. These include the need for resources for commuter railroads, the need for greater transparency for all railroads and the need for dedicated spectrum to ensure commuter railroads have bandwidth to operate PTC. S. 650 doesn't address these other issues. Rather, the bill just focuses on the deadline. I want to make sure the bill solves all the other problems.

In the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I filed amendments that actually address these other outstanding issues. I want to make sure funding is available for cash-strapped passenger railroads and commuter lines. I want to bolster transparency and make sure we know where railroads truly are in the implementation process. I want to make sure commuter railroads have the frequency they need to build out PTC, and I do not want any bill to move to the floor that ignores these needs and shortchanges our commuter railroads.

Another issue I hold with S. 650 is the bill's lack of attention to other serious safety concerns that should be addressed hand-in-hand with the shortcomings PTC works to resolve. Over the past few years, we have witnessed an onslaught of other rail safety issues spurred by far too many preventable accidents. Many of these accidents have happened on Metro-North, the commuter railroad serving Connecticut, the State I proudly represent. From mid-2013 into early 2014, we witnessed five major incidents on our commuter railroad. Then, again in February 2015, we witnessed another horrific incident in which six lives were